This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A centralized computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels by a plurality of users using a plurality of carriers, said centralized computer system comprising:

a plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices, wherein the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices are adapted to communicate cooperatively, wherein each server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is programmed to perform at least one particular shipping management function of a plurality of shipping management functions, wherein each particular shipping management function contributes to managing shipping of the plurality of parcels;

at least a first server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is adapted for concurrent remote access by the plurality of users via a communications network, wherein the first server computer device is adapted for communicating an access of the first server computer device by one or more users of the plurality of users to at least one functionally aligned server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices;

at least a second server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to perform a first particular shipping management function, wherein said first particular shipping management function comprises rating each respective request by each respective user of the plurality of users to ship a respective parcel, wherein rating for a respective parcel is performed by the second server computer device according to a respective shipping input from a respective user via a respective client computer device, and wherein rating for the respective parcel is performed by the second server computer device for each delivery service offered by each carrier of a plurality of carriers that would ship the respective parcel; and

at least a third server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to perform a second particular shipping management function, wherein said second particular shipping management function comprises providing tracking information to a respective user regarding a respective shipping status corresponding to a respective parcel that was shipped by the respective user using a respective carrier of the plurality of carriers, wherein the third server computer device is programmed to:

receive a respective request from a respective user of the plurality of users for a shipment status of a respective parcel, wherein the respective request comprises an identifier of the respective parcel.

determine a carrier associated with the identifier,

establish an online connection with a respective carrier system associated with the carrier, and

obtain from the respective carrier system through the online connection, shipment status information for the respective parcel according to the identifier.

2. (Previously Presented) The centralized computer system of Claim 1, wherein at least the second server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is further programmed to generate a respective simultaneous cross-comparison display of respective shipping rates for each delivery service offered by each carrier of the plurality of carriers that would ship the respective parcel, wherein said simultaneous cross-comparison display is generated for display to a respective display device associated with a respective client computer used by a respective user to access the centralized computer system.

3. (Previously Presented) The centralized computer system of Claim 1, wherein at least a fourth server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is programmed to perform a third particular shipping management function, wherein said third particular shipping management function comprises accessing data regarding at least one aspect of facilitating shipping management of the respective parcel, wherein said data is accessed from at least one database, wherein

the fourth server computer device does not provide tracking information regarding the respective shipping status corresponding to the respective parcel, and wherein the fourth server computer device does not perform rating for the respective parcel.

4. (Previously Presented) The centralized computer system of Claim 1, wherein each said respective shipping input comprises: a first respective item of information characterizing the respective parcel to be shipped by the respective user, a first respective location from which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user, and a second respective location to which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user.

Claim 5. (Cancelled).

6. (Previously Presented) A centralized computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels by a plurality of users using a plurality of carriers, wherein each user accesses the centralized computer system over a communications network using a respective client computer device, and wherein each respective user client computer device is adapted for communications with the centralized computer system via the communications network, said centralized computer system comprising:

a plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices, wherein the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices are adapted to communicate cooperatively, wherein each server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is programmed to perform at least one particular shipping management function of a plurality of shipping management functions, wherein each particular shipping management function contributes to managing shipping of the plurality of parcels;

at least a first server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to communicate with each of the plurality of users over multiple telecommunications connections over the communications network at one time, wherein the first server computer device is adapted for communicating an access of the first server computer device by one or more users of

the plurality of users to at least one other functionally aligned server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices; and

at least a second server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to receive a respective access by one or more respective users of the plurality of users via the first server computer device wherein at least one respective access comprises a respective input by a respective user of a respective tracking number, wherein the second server computer is further programmed to respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by determining a carrier associated with the respective tracking number, wherein the second server computer is further programmed to further respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by accessing a respective carrier computer system of a plurality of carrier computer systems through a respective online connection with the respective carrier computer system over the communications network, wherein the respective carrier computer system is associated with the tracking number, and by obtaining carrier tracking information corresponding to the tracking number from the respective carrier computer system through the respective online connection with the respective carrier computer system, and wherein the second server computer is further programmed to further respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by displaying the carrier tracking information to the respective user.

7. (Previously Presented) A centralized computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels by a plurality of users using a plurality of carriers, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a communications network using a respective client computer device, and wherein each respective user client computer device is adapted for communication with the centralized computer system via the communications network, said centralized computer system comprising:

a plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices, wherein the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices are adapted to communicate cooperatively;

at least a first server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to communicate with each of the plurality

of users via the communications network at one time, wherein the first server computer device is adapted for communicating an access of the first server computer device by one or more users of the plurality of users to at least one other functionally aligned server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices;

at least a second server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to receive a respective access by one or more respective users of the plurality of users via the first server computer device wherein at least one respective access comprises a respective input by a respective user of a respective request for shipping information regarding a proposed shipment of a respective parcel, wherein the second server computer is further programmed to respond to the respective input of the respective request by obtaining respective data from at least one system database corresponding to the proposed shipment of the respective parcel;

at least a third server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to use the respective data to calculate a first respective shipping rate for, and determine a first date and time by, which a first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a first delivery service, to calculate a second respective shipping rate for, and determine a second date and time by, which a second carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a second delivery service, and to calculate a third respective shipping rate for, and determine a third date and time by, which the first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a third delivery service;

at least one server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to simultaneously display the first respective shipping rate, the first date and time, the second respective shipping rate, the second date and time, the third respective shipping rate, and the third date and time, to a display device in communication with a respective client computer device used by the respective user to input the respective request; and

at least a fourth server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices that is programmed to access a respective carrier system through a respective online connection and to obtain respective carrier tracking information from the respective carrier system through the respective online connection

regarding a respective shipping status corresponding to the respective identifier and facilitate a display of the respective carrier tracking information to a respective display device in communication with a respective client computer device used by a respective user that requests shipping status information for a respective parcel.

Claim 8. (Cancelled).

9. (Previously Presented) A method of configuring a plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices for managing shipping of a plurality of respective parcels by a plurality of respective users using any carrier of a plurality of carriers, wherein each server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is adapted for communication with at least one other functionally aligned server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices, wherein at least a first server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices is adapted for concurrent remote access by the plurality of respective users via a communications network, said method comprising:

programming at least a second server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to concurrently receive via the first server computer device a respective shipping input from each respective user of a first subset of the plurality of respective users via a respective client computer device accessed by each respective user of the first subset of the plurality of respective users, wherein each said respective shipping input comprises: a first respective item of information characterizing a respective parcel to be shipped by the respective user, a first respective location from which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user, and a second respective location to which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user;

programming at least one server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to calculate a first respective shipping rate for, and determine a first date and time by, which a first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a first delivery service, to calculate a second respective shipping rate for, and determine a second date and time by, which a second carrier would deliver the

respective parcel via a second delivery service, and to calculate a third respective shipping rate for, and determine a third date and time by, which the first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a third delivery service;

programming at least one server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to simultaneously display the first respective shipping rate, the first date and time, the second respective shipping rate, the second date and time, the third respective shipping rate, and the third date and time, to a respective display device in communication with a respective client computer device used by the respective user to input the respective request; and

programming at least a third server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to receive a respective access by a respective user of the plurality of users via the first server computer device wherein at least one respective access comprises a respective input by a respective user of a respective tracking number, the third server computer being further programmed to respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by determining a carrier associated with the respective tracking number, the third server computer being further programmed to further respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by accessing a respective carrier computer system of a plurality of carrier computer systems through a respective online connection with the respective carrier computer system over the communications network, wherein the respective carrier computer system is associated with the tracking number, and by obtaining carrier tracking information corresponding to the tracking number from the respective carrier computer system through the respective online connection with the respective carrier computer system, and the third server computer being further programmed to further respond to the respective input of the respective tracking number by displaying the carrier tracking information to a respective display device in communication with a respective user computer device used by the respective user that input the respective tracking number.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 9, said method further comprising:

programming at least a third server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to receive via the first server computer device a respective tracking input from each respective user of a second subset of the plurality of respective users via a respective client computer device, wherein each said respective tracking input comprises a respective identifier of a respective parcel that has been shipped by the respective user using a respective carrier of the plurality of carriers; and

programming at least a fourth server computer device of the plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices to access a respective carrier system through a respective online connection and to obtain respective carrier tracking information from the respective carrier system through the respective online connection regarding a respective shipping status corresponding to the respective identifier and to display the respective carrier tracking information to the respective display device in communication with a respective client computer device used by the respective user.

Claims 11 - 30 (Cancelled).

31. (Previously Presented) A centralized computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of respective parcels by a plurality of respective users using any carrier of a plurality of carriers, said centralized computer system comprising:

at least a first server computer device that is dedicated for concurrent remote access by a plurality of respective client computer devices via a communications network, and for communicating an access of the first server computer device by one or more users of the plurality of users to at least one other functionally aligned server computer device of a plurality of functionally aligned server computer devices; [[and]]

at least a second server computer device that is dedicated to a delivery scheduling and rating function, said delivery scheduling and rating function comprising computer program instructions to receive a respective shipping input via the first server computer from each respective user of the plurality of respective users via a respective client computer device, wherein each said respective shipping input comprises: a first respective item of information characterizing a respective parcel to be shipped by the

respective user, a first respective location from which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user, and a second respective location to which the respective parcel is to be shipped by the respective user, wherein the second server computer device is further programmed to use each respective shipping input from each respective user to calculate at least a first respective shipping rate for, and determine a first date and time by, which a first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a first delivery service, to calculate at least a second respective shipping rate for, and determine a second date and time by, which the first carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a second delivery service, and to calculate at least a third respective shipping rate for, and determine a third date and time by, which a second carrier would deliver the respective parcel via a third delivery service, and wherein the second server computer device is further programmed to simultaneously display at least the first respective shipping rate, at least the first date and time, at least the second respective shipping rate, at least the second date and time, at least the third respective shipping rate, and at least the third date and time, to a respective display device in communication with the respective client computer device used by the respective user to input the respective shipping input and

at least a third server computer device that is dedicated to perform a tracking function, said tracking function comprising computer program instructions to receive a respective tracking request input via the first server computer from a respective user of the plurality of respective users via a respective user computer device, said respective tracking request input comprising a respective carrier-specific tracking number, said tracking function further comprising computer program instructions to:

determine a carrier associated with the respective carrier-specific tracking identifier,

access a respective carrier system through a respective online connection,

obtain respective carrier tracking information from the respective carrier system through the respective online connection associated with the respective carrier-specific tracking identifier, and

facilitate a display of the respective carrier tracking information to a respective display device in communication with the respective user computer device.

Claims 32-43. (Cancelled).